

Issue 34 | INDIGENOUS
SIGHT

| IPCF Magazine |

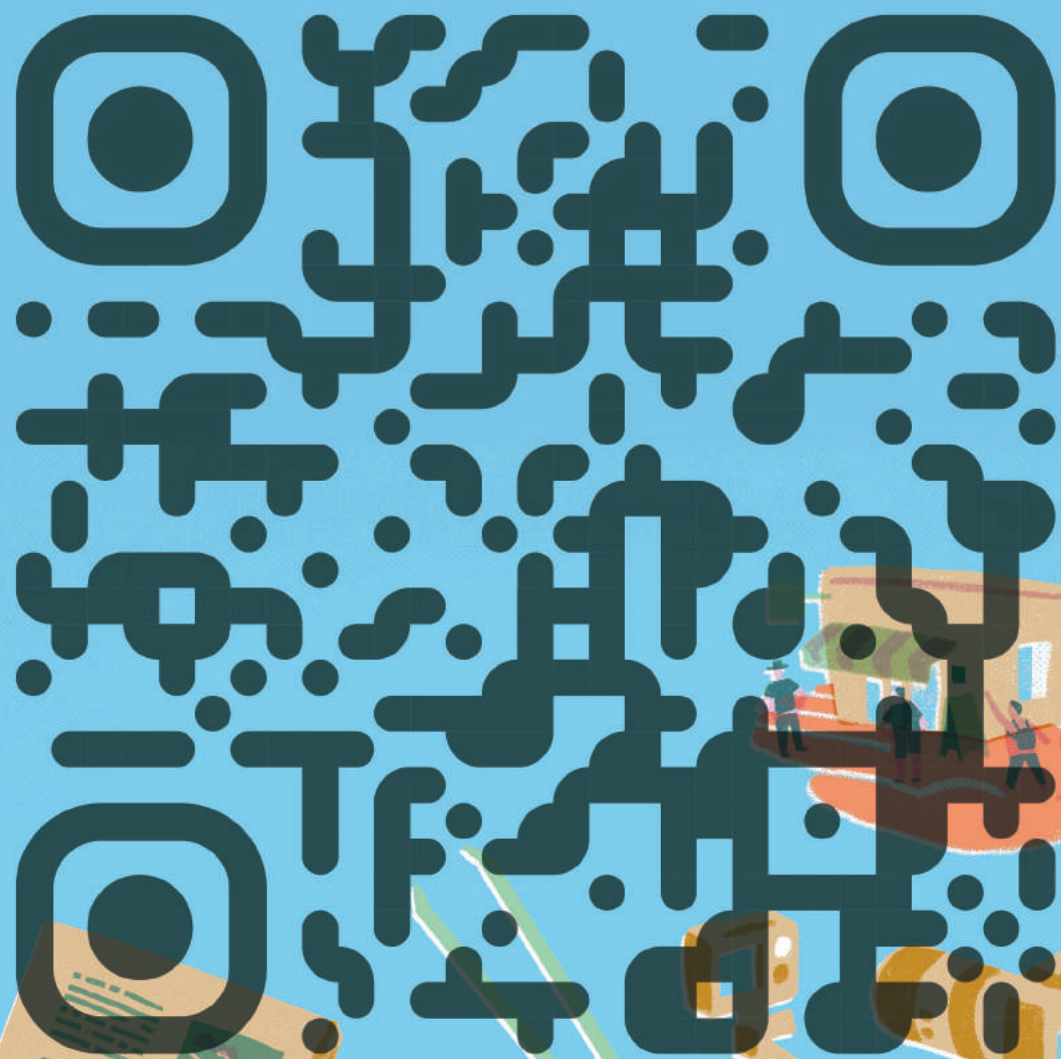


Passing the Baton

Sinbilan: tmllyung?

What to Do in the Water?





原視
INDIGENOUS
SIGHT

IPCF
雜誌

從原住民族的角度看世界
圖文好看線上版

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rako a vatvatek: tamo macikaop do rako a wawa

We are **Part of the Ocean**

o wawa ya am, no ya na cirain no zezak aka no ya rana somdep o araw am, ya mitarek o gaza na. ano ya mehnep aka no ya mangci rana am, ya mitarek o arisis na a, o rako a wawa ya am, niyamamaog na ni ama ta do to. ano mian do oned no wawa am, akmey ya mikatlo o na kavavavan, ya macita o makakaday a maoran no oned no wawa. amian so zangaz no kakawan, amian so tomayo do vavahay a tazingan, amian so koyta do teyrahem no kakakawan, amyan so makapia a milingalingay a amoamong.

ya pangaaapan o rako a wawa so iyakan a ikabsoy no velel no tao, ya pangozayan ori do pimasawdan. no kalilikey namen am, miawawat namen do wawa a kakanakan, mipazovo namen rana am, kakdain o kangay do keysakan, yato dangay do ipiparakeh rana am, ya rana malavat o minavazay do pangaaapan. ya makdeng o na pazonan so aktokto no tao a nimapo do wawa ya. do ya piveyvazayan sicyakoa ya ma, ala yaro o katoposan, am ya pereh o ya ma' ap a iweywawalam no kakoa. ori o kakdayan so cireng no rarakeh a mapakatkat so pangaktoktowan do kataotao, ikadpeh no teneteneg no tao.

ya da akmey bengbengen no koka o adan a iweywawalam no yancomin siciakwaya, ori o na ikatazestes do awawan a ya mabalinas no iweywawalam. tana da ipinakem no tatasa aka tao o kavangon so iweywawalam aka no cirecireng am, ala ji misinaoli rana o iweywawalam no kokwa, tana yamia so pivatvatekan aka no vakovakog a citahen am, ya miparai o iweywawalam takamo do ya nakenakeman siya. ko anoyongan o ngongyod a mapazon so makakaday a iweywawalam o mapizokab so tao ya, no ji nazibowan o cirecireng am, abo rana o jjakala a vazay.

The ocean takes on different colors at sunrise and sunset, its scenery changing as the tide rises and falls. The ocean is an ever-changing beauty created by God. When you dive into the water, the sea's flat surface transforms into a three-dimensional space right before your eyes. You are greeted with a diverse and complete ocean ecosystem... colorful coral reefs, eels peering out of holes, octopus squeezing under rocks, schools of tropical fish.

The ocean provides resources and knowledge, and it shapes our lives and culture. The ocean is our long-time friend. When we're young, the ocean is our playmate. As teens, we want to conquer her. With age and experience, adults find a rhythm of coexistence in her company. But the ocean's influence is most significant when we enter the workplace. At work we might score 8/10 for effort and professionalism, but we're lucky to reach 2/10 when it comes to traditional culture. So when we return to our communities, we're eager to be recognized by our elders, in hopes of earning more points through commitment to traditions.

State restrictions on indigenous groups have made it difficult for indigenous cultures to prosper. Even if modern society voices the importance of indigenous language revitalization and cultural inheritance, indigenous peoples still cannot return to their traditional cultures. Learning traditional languages only in classrooms and from books pushes our culture further away. I believe that only by doing things ourselves can we establish identity, that only by identifying with our culture can we move others, and that we can create possibilities using our language as a tool.

Panirsirngen do yanbonkay
Chairman of the Indigenous
Peoples Cultural Foundation

瑪拉歐斯
Maras



INDIGENOUS SIGHT

Issue

34

Published by: Indigenous People Cultural Foundation
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Post Taipei Magazine No. 2064
(mail category: "Magazine") ISSN : 2313-111X

Looking at the world from an
indigenous perspective.
Online version: insight.ipcf.org.tw



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Passing the Baton

What to Do in the Water?

There's a taboo in indigenous hunting — you can't decide beforehand what to hunt and how much to take. Resources are a gift from nature; there isn't an endless supply for us humans to use.

Oceans and rivers provide a rich source of food and nutrients. We have a saying, "the ocean is our refrigerator." But hold on a minute. When I go to the water, down to the fridge to get some food, why do I find flyers, garbage, and so many tourists? I haven't thought about what food I will take, but this isn't the ocean I used to know.





sinbilan: tmllyung

Note: "sinbilan: tmllyung," means "passing the baton: river work passed down by our elders" in Atayal language.

Set Sail with Flying Fish, the Core Culture

Center of the Tao World

Written by Shi Shao-Wen; Illustrated by Lin Jia-Dong;

Translated by Ker Nai-Yu

Up and Close with the Ocean



Long long ago...



According to a Tao legend, several Tao people went searching for food along the coast and accidentally discovered a winged fish, never before seen. After catching the fish, they cooked it with other fishes and shellfish, and upon consumption, sores began developing on their skin. The Black-winged Flying Fish King later appeared in the dream of an elder in this community and told him the cause of the sores and how to prevent them. He was also cautioned that the flying fish caught must be cooked in its own pots and plates and never with other ingredients, then requested that the elder come and meet the flying fish king the next day on the coast.

The next day, the elder went to the coast as agreed, and met the black-winged flying fish that was in his dream. The black-winged flying fish began introducing the different types of flying fishes, their season, ways to catch and kill them, and how to sun-dry and cook flying fish, as well as relevant taboos, all the rules and knowledge regarding the Flying Fish Ritual and flying fish season. These customs were therefore passed down and became the traditional etiquette of the Tao life.



The Tao Perspective of Territory and Border

Under the influence of administrative land demarcation practiced after the Nationalist Government came to Taiwan, the concept of community border of the contemporary Tao people is increasingly confined to the lines on the map. However, in the early days, ancestors would use specific landscapes as community borders, and extending from the community borders towards the ocean would be the dividing line of community fishing grounds. Although the current division between Iraraley Community and Iranmeylek Community is Lion Couple Rock, pushing back in time, the community border would have changed repeatedly with discussions or fights between the two communities.

In traditional society, communities respect the land boundary of their traditional territories and abide by relevant rules. Therefore, many community conflicts originated from fighting for resources across the border. For example, millet farming beyond community territory, and fishing for flying fish beyond community border outside the flying fish season. (During the flying fish season, communities are allowed to trespass community borders and fish for flying fish in the water territory of other communities, details to follow later.)



Flying Fish Ritual

Tao marine activities mainly occur in two periods, during the flying fish season (including mivanwa, the Flying Fish Ritual), and outside the flying fish season.

The traditional Tao night calendar does not follow a regular timing but instead depends on the leap month and tides, and mivanwa is generally held after the Lantern Festival. Following the order of locations, the Kuroshio Current passes through, starting from the Imaorod Community, Iratay Community, Ivalino Community, Yayo Community, Iranmeylek Community, and finally Iraraley Community. On the day of the Flying Fish Ritual, all the men in the community must gather on the beach, if a toddler can walk, he must join as well. Those who do not take part in the community Flying Fish Ritual would be presumed dead or critically ill.

Days before the Flying Fish Ritual, people will push their big boats onto the beach. On the day of the ritual, family members will stand in a line behind the big family boat, slaughter a piglet or chicken as a sacrifice, and pray for the flying fish season. In the meantime, a community meeting would be held during the Flying Fish Ritual, where elders in each family would take part on behalf of the family and take this opportunity to encourage and educate the younger generation. The number of 10-person big boats in the communities (the plank boat comes in chinurikuran, the big size, and tatara, small size) nowadays can no longer fill the entire beach, those that actually do set sail to fish is even fewer, all that they are used for now is in rituals and the annual rowing marine cup competition. One year, a family in Iraraley Community added a pair of oars to a single-person boat during the Flying Fish Ritual and took part in the ritual pretending to be a two-person boat, a move which was criticized by the community; some families without a 10-person big boat will also push onto the beach boats that can carry more than two persons to take part in the ritual.



Flying Fish Season, Minganangana, and Kalimman

The flying fish season begins right after the end of the Flying Fish Ritual. At the beginning of the flying fish season, only big boats can set sail to fish at night, and only scoop nets are allowed. Even though traditional big plank boats have now been replaced by motorboats, some motorboats still follow the abovementioned rule. After two weeks or so, small boats will be pushed onto the beach, and that would be when big boats could use large fishing nets and flying fish as bait to catch mahi-mahi.

After 10-person big boats have completed their mission, the minganangana would follow to recognize and acknowledge the hardship and achievements of the men for fishing. Prior to the minganangana, women in the family would capture large amounts of land crabs and make taro cake to show their appreciation to men in the family. The Harvest Ritual takes place sometime around apiya vehan (the good month, roughly in June), which means the end of the flying fish season. During this time, they would celebrate the bountiful harvest of fruit, millet, sweet potato, taro, and various catch. During the ritual, people would gift one another in the community with their own harvest. The ritual connects families and friends, and elders in the family would ask the younger ones to bring food as gift to other households so their children can get to know family relatives.

In the old days, dried flying fish do not preserve well, therefore there is the kalimman (the final month for flying fish consumption, roughly from September to October). Nowadays, refrigerators are common, so it's up to individuals or families to decide whether or not to continue consuming the flying fish after the kalimman.

Mipazos

The end of the year is the kapitowan month of the Tao (roughly around November), a time to worship ghosts and deities. In the old days, on the day of mipazos, the ghost and deity ritual, every household would place two sets of offerings on the roof for the deities and family ancestors respectively. Nowadays, most families only make offerings to the deities but no longer their own ancestors, which is probably the result of the change in religion.

At the beginning of the ritual, the family leading the ritual will initiate the offering, which is then followed by other families by placing their offerings onto the roof in turns. The Iralaley Community mainly holds their ritual in the community whereas other communities place their offerings by the sea for the ritual. What is worth noting is the taboo of mipazos. On the day of the ritual, everyone is prohibited from entering the mountain because the ghost might come down the mountain to consume their offerings, so one would definitely be affected if you enter the mountain during this time.





The Code of Ethics for the Fishing and Gathering Culture

When setting sail to catch the flying fish during the flying fish season in Orchid Island, one is not confined to the community borders and can fish wherever the flying fish school swims. After fishing is done for the day, they would scale the fish on the beach or at the harbor. If the catch is smaller that day, it would be distributed fair and square to every participant while on the boat. What is interesting is that the boat and fishnet are also considered participants to the catch, so they would get a share of the catch as well, which would go to the boat owner. If the fishnet is publicly owned, there would be no extra quota for the fishnet. If the catch is big, it would be shared with other crew members who did not take part in the catch.

The flying fish season is the most important time of

the year for the Tao, and the many taboos are there to respect nature for such provision. Spearfishing is prohibited during the flying fish season; one must not cast stones onto the beach and should watch their behavior and speech; the scaling of flying fish and hanging the fish onto racks must be completed before the sun sets, if the sun is already about to set, they would rather leave everything for the next morning. If taboo is accidentally violated, a piglet or chicken must be slaughtered for purification.

After the flying fish season ends, the entire island again resumes the traditional territory borders between communities, and people can no longer trespass into other communities for spearfishing and fishing. People generally believe that when you trespass to fish, you are acting in the belief that there is no one left in the community or that you consider the entire community lazy, therefore, out of respect, they do not easily trespass.



The Tao has some lesser well-known cultural features, for example, you can only obtain resources from the ocean or in the intertidal zone once a day, including fishing, gathering, and spearfishing, because going into the water twice a day is considered very greedy. When gathering along the intertidal zone, you must never turn your back to the ocean since you never know when the next wave is coming. Only gather as much as you can consume, if you do not cease gathering by sunset, you will be tempted by the spiritual world, and danger tends to ensue when there is a lack of light or cannot see clearly, therefore one must never over-gather.

With the modern concept of conservation emerging, indigenous persons practicing traditional activities are often questioned. But for indigenous peoples, we do not need to go out of our ways to practice animal conservation because the rules followed by our ancestors were derived from the life habits

of animals. For example, we catch seasonal fishes including the flying fish and mahi-mahi during the flying fish season, which allows the demersal fish to reproduce and restore population during this period. From October to the following January each year, the northeast monsoon brings strong waves and people refrain from fishing at sea and gathering, which also provides the environment of the Orchid Island with natural protection and time to recover.

Only when you actually live and practice it in life will you be able to learn by heart the culture and rules, practicing enables the cultural knowledge to be inherited, and continue to be passed on in the Tao society without end.



Struggling Between Outside Forces and Tradition

When Outside Investment is Introduced to Orchid Island

Written by Chou Jia-Hui; Illustrated by Lin Jia-Dong;
Translated by Ker Nai-Yu

Is Tourism Our Only Way Out?



The earliest literature documenting Orchid Island is the Account of the Eastern and Western Oceans by Zhang Xie in the Ming Dynasty, in which he referred to Orchid Island as “Hong Dou Islet”. In 1988, Hengchun County magistrate Chou Yu-Chi included Orchid Island, then named “Hong Tou Islet”, as part of the Qing Dynasty territory, under Hengchun County. This was the official inclusion of Orchid Island in national territory, marking the beginning of colonization in Orchid Island.

From the Qing Dynasty, Japanese colonization, relocation of the Nationalist Government to Taiwan, to the current cultural tourism post-globalization, the Tao has experienced tremendous social and cultural changes. From many anthropological or ethnographical studies, we can see that Taiwan indigenous peoples were seen as a spectacle in society in the past, and the Tao a subject of observation and study. By the 1980s, with developments in commercial activities and tourism in Taiwan, indigenous peoples have in turn become the target of imagination and exploration as the contemporary society makes the pilgrimage for the other.

Since the Orchid Island Steamer first set sail in 1968, Taiwan Airlines and Lanyu Hotel followed, opening the curtain to the age of tourism in Orchid Island. Discussions regarding Orchid Island have turned from the historical perspective of the colonizer to cultural criticism based on tourism thinking.



The Cultural Impact and Collapse Under Globalization?

Having experienced the Japanese ruling period and Nationalist Government governance, Orchid Island was greatly influenced in terms of the political system, society, culture, and natural environment. During the Japanese ruling period, the Government-General of Taiwan set up an anthropological research zone in Orchid Island and prohibited development by outsiders. Meanwhile, the Tao people were taught the Japanese marine culture, knowledge, and concepts, with their life, customs, and areas of traditional activities confined. After the Nationalist Government came to Taiwan, Hong Tou Islet Township Office was established in 1946 with the Orchid Island Command set up to use the Tao traditional territories and followed with many incidents of persecution against the Tao. With the Indigenous land control policy lifted in 1967, Orchid Island was officially open to the public and outside investment began pouring into Orchid Island.



During the process of post-globalization tourism development worldwide, time/space is no longer an obstacle in the exploration and visit of places. The concept of “place” is explicitly described by Tim Cresswell, an English human geographer, in the book *Place: A Short Introduction*, “place stands for both an object (a thing that geographers and others look at, research and write about), and a way of looking. Looking at the world as a set of places in some way separate from each other is both an act of defining what exists (ontology) and a particular way of seeing and knowing the world (epistemology and metaphysics).” When looking at or understanding the liquid capital, tourism, visual culture/text, place, and identity under globalization, from what aspect should we take, look at or write about them?

Post-tourism Orchid Island also faces a problem, which the local indigenous people refer to as “outside investment”. Whether it's outside investment working with local Tao people, or outside tourism operators with standing development in Orchid Island, they are simply replicating the Taiwan-style “tourism industry”, including one-stop service operation, land development, cultural/natural tourism interpretation, or automobile rental service. On the one hand, this has caused tremendous impact on the accommodations operated by local

indigenous people commercially and economically, on the other hand, traditional perspectives of the local culture are misunderstood. The enormous amount of garbage brought about by tourism, changes, and conflicts to traditional dietary culture are all inevitable consequences. For example, the traditional fishing ground regulated by elders during *mivanwa*, the fishing ceremony, is invaded and destroyed by commercial water activities. Tourists violating the taboo and touching the plank boat during the flying fish season also occurs all too often. The Tao people need to brainstorm on ways to protect the root of their culture so that it does not collapse and disappear.

In 2021, a few Tao persons were charged for catching the protected species Humphead wrasse, it was a violation of the Wild Conservation Act, and he made the news. In the news report, the media described them as killers of Taiwan's protected species, but how the traditional behavior of local indigenous people towards marine conservation was understood and seen has long been neglected and never discussed. The Tao has been living on Orchid Island for hundreds and perhaps a thousand years, they have their own system regarding the sustainability of the ocean, as Tao writer Syaman Rapongan once said, “We must learn of the temperament and nature of the ocean. We have the ocean DNA



within us.” This is an embodiment of the Tao cultural concept when applied to their water territory, which is different from how the Taiwan society views the ocean.

The Gaze and Reflection of the Tao

After Orchid Island opened up to tourism, the coastline was destroyed, traditional land was used for commercial activities, the traffic chaotic during peak season, and the garbage was completely overloaded. It certainly did not help that some outside cultural

tourism interpretations lack local knowledge and foundation in traditional culture, and many Tao people choose to work in the tourism industry for better business opportunities and livelihood, in turn spending less time on the maintenance and farming of traditional lands. Altogether, the ecological development and cultural heritage in Orchid Island were impacted. How to maintain the value of traditional culture and the sustainability of the ecological environment is the reality and challenges facing the Tao since Orchid Island embraced tourism.



Lanyu Township Office of Taitung County points out that the natural environment and traditional culture of the Orchid Island are well-preserved. We should really reflect on this.



Diverse and Rich Marine Knowledge System

East Coast Ethnic Groups

Swirling ocean surrounding beautiful islands, the Tao is not the only indigenous people in Taiwan with a marine culture, the Pangcah, Kavalan, and Pinuyumayan all live alongside the ocean, and intimate connections with the ocean can be observed in their legends, diet, song, and dance, each with their individual unique Sea Ritual traditions.

Written by Liang Weng-Jin; Illustrated by Lin Jia-Dong;
Translated by Ker Nai-Yu

We Never Forget Sea Rituals!



Mikesi' at 'Atolan Community, Fight to Defend the Sacred Place of the Community

Every summer, various Pangcah communities host rituals related to rivers and the ocean, including the sea ritual, river ritual, and fishing ritual. In addition to commemorating the hardship suffered by ancestors navigating the waters to reach Taiwan, and expressing gratitude to nature and deities for bountiful harvests, the preparation process of the ritual is an opportunity to train the age class to take part in public affairs in the community.

The 'Atolan Community in Taitung calls their sea ritual Mikesi', and is held on the third day of the Harvest Ritual. On the day of the ritual, the young and mature age classes must dive into assigned waters to catch fish and shellfish via various fishing methods. Once ashore, the catch is calculated for score and shared among older people and various age classes as a symbol of sharing and respecting elders.

In the past, the 'Atolan Community would hold the sea ritual in the location decided by community elders. In 2002, a tourist park was rumored to be developed in Pacifalan, but according to legends, it was where Pangcah ancestors first came ashore on this island, and also one of the locations sea ceremonies would be held. To defend the important sacred ancestral place, a series of protests began in the community leading to the building of the sea ritual hut at Pacifalan in 2005. The protests stopped the development for the time being, and the sea ritual has been held there regularly ever since.



Parunang, the Coming of Age Ritual Held Every Seven Years in Lidaw Community

Nanshi Pangcah is the utmost northern Pangcah group, among which, the Lidaw Community still practices the Parunang, Boat Ceremony, unique to the Pangcah. Legend has it that the ancestors of Lidaw Community traveled in 3 canoes and ended up on the East Coast. In memory of the hardship ancestors overcame in developing a new home, every 7 years, the community would hold the Parunang alongside the coming of age ritual for the age class.

The structure of the Pangcah age class is very strict, the male in the community begins receiving rigorous physical and skills training at the age of 12. After 7 years of training and upon completion of the coming of age ritual, they can officially enter the age class organization in the community. The Parunang, held once every 7 years, in Lidaw Community is the last step to the coming of age ritual. On the day of Parunang, men who have just been promoted to the young adult age class will carry into the water canoes symbolizing the ones used by their ancestors, swim 15 meters away from the shore before swimming back, and once ashore, they will eat Bawsa, packed meal prepared by a female of similar age, thus completing the ritual.

Combining the parunang and the coming of age ritual not only relives the image of ancestors crossing the ocean to reach the island, but also symbolizes the new generation taking responsibility for public affairs in the community, and assuming the mission of building families to keep the community going with future generations.



Laligi at Paterungan Community, the First Sea Ritual Site Covered in Wave Breakers

Legend has it that the Kavalan crossed the ocean from southern islands, and was once active in maritime trade. In the 18th century, with non-indigenous peoples moving into the Ilan Plain, they uprooted and migrated east, residing along the Hualien and Taitung coast.

They left their ancestral land, but never forgot their connection with the ocean. Every year, as firey red *Erythrina orientalis* blooms in the early spring, signaling the season for flying fish, men in the community would start weaving fishnets and build bamboo rafts, and select a high tide day according to traditions to hold Laligi, the sea ritual. Laligi symbolizes the beginning of a new year and is an important ritual to the community. Widowers aside, all men in the community must gather at the estuary on the day, string together pig liver, heart, and meat, throw into the ocean and pray to the deities for bountiful harvest and safety at sea.

The Kavalan had once stopped holding the sea ritual and did not resume until they initiated the name rectification movement. The Paterungan Community resumed Laligi in 1996 and decided that Paterongan beach, the place where ancestors came ashore according to legends, shall be the first ceremonial site for sea ritual, and Xiaohu Chuanao the second ceremonial site. In 2016, the Hualien County Government installed concrete wave breakers along the beach of the first ceremonial site, protecting the coastline from sea erosion. Not only did it destroy the natural landscape, but there was no available path for their people to reach the water, and the original ceremonial site was also covered. After protest from the people and negotiations with the county government, the wave breakers were moved further ashore and a staircase leading to sea was put in, providing them a space for the sea ritual.



Mulaliyaban at the Sakuban Community, Worship Towards the North, East, and South Makes All the Difference

Once upon a time, the ancestors of the Pinuyumayan sailed overseas in search of staple food crops. Having discovered millet on Orchid Island, they took great pains in bringing the millet grains back to Taiwan so their people never had to worry about food again. In commemoration of the benevolence of their ancestors, every year after the harvest of millet, they will cook millet rice by the ocean as a way of worshipping their ancestors, and this is the origin of the Pinuyumayan Mulaliyaban, also known as the Millet Ritual.

There is another legend regarding the origin of the Mulaliyaban. Once upon a time, a naughty Pinuyumayan boy often played pranks on people, causing people grief, so when they went hunting on Green Island, they decided to abandon him on the island. When the boy learned that he was abandoned, he cried so loud that the deities took pity on him, and assigned a big fish to carry him back to Taiwan. The boy was instructed to prepare millet rice in the worship of the ocean after millet is harvested each year, as a way to thank the deities and the big fish for helping him.



With various sea ritual legends, the later generations worshipped in different directions towards the Orchid Island, Green Island, and Mt. 'Atolan respectively. Nowadays, only the Sakuban Community still practices the sea ritual. The Rara and Sapayan clans worship in the direction of the Orchid Island at the estuary of the Pacific Ocean; the Arasis clan, being the descendants of the naughty boy, worshipped in the direction of the Green Island at Maoshan; the legend passed on by the Pasaraat and Palangatu clans was of the Mountain God wishing to eat freshly harvested crop once millet is harvested, therefore they worship in the direction of Mt. 'Atolan at the north shore of Beinan River during the sea ritual.

On the morning of the sea ritual, men in the community would first gather inside the clan's ancestral spirit house before setting off to their individual worshipping locations, where they would build a make-shift grass hut and worship shed, cook the millet, and begin their worshipping ritual. The clans would meet to the east of the community after their ceremonies are completed, and return to the community together; in the afternoon, a series of celebratory events including wrestling, banquet, song, and dance would follow.



The sea ritual is closely connected to the traditional lives of these ethnic groups, an important medium shaping the collective memory of the groups. Influenced by the environment and lifestyle changes in modern society, the sea ritual of each group has suffered tremendous changes. In addition to the ritual being simplified and time shortened, its survival is also at risk due to the dwindling population in the community.

The ceremonial site for Paterungan Community and 'Atolan Community have both once nearly disappeared due to public construction and land development; Lidaw Community has altered the running trails of their coming of age ritual and locations of Parunang many times due to changes

in the environment and landscape; the tradition of worshipping in the direction of the Green Island during the sea ritual in Sakuban Community has discontinued, became no one in the Arasis clan can pass on the tradition.

Originally a male-dominated scene, some of the sea ceremonies held nowadays allow women to observe at the scene. Some ethnic groups combine beach cleaning and marine environmental education with their sea ceremonies, events conveying the modern concept of ecological preservation. This demonstrates that the sea ritual of indigenous peoples is more than just a spiritual belief, but a complete system of marine knowledge comprising of traditional skills, social relations, ecology, environment, and more.

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The Very Model of an Atayal Hunter

Chang Jen-Chieh

“Born to a poor family, Chang Jen-Chieh, the Atayal hunter and founder of Wulai Hunter school, followed his schoolteacher to hunt and fish in the mountains as a child, exchanging his kill for rice and money to help support his family. Now, as an adult, he turns the hunting and survival skills he has acquired since childhood into curriculum knowledge to pass it on to a wide range of people.”

Written by Kuo Po-Jiun; Photo credit: Huang Jiang-Bing;

Translated by Lin Shih-Fen

We follow Chang on a hunting trip driving upstream along Wulai's Nanshih River in his “Lamborghini” light truck loaded with fishing tools like fishnets, spears, and fish baskets, along with rice and salt for preserving the catch. Along the way, he'd stop periodically and get off to check the movement of fish in the stream. Despite the distance of dozens of meters between us and the stream, his observation is not any less acute. “Fish are running upstream. Let's go after them!” he says in a casual tone. Then we jump into the truck again and drive off into the depth of the mountains.

After about 80 minutes of drive from Wulai's old streets, we arrive at the upper reaches of the Nanshih River at the junction of New Taipei City and Yilan County. The riverbank is overgrown with wild plants taller than a person, and upon arriving, Chang takes out a scythe and begins to cut the tall weeds. In a flash, a path

Passing Along the Atayal Culture to
Attract Youths Back Home



Young people nowadays tend to think they can make good hunters simply with a hunting rifle and a motorcycle. But they neglect the fact that to be a real hunter, one must be able to wait in patience in order to hunt something big.



The Atayal hunter Chang Jen-Chieh is fishing at the upper reaches of the Nanshih River.



of wild animals was not officially banned, it was common for schoolchildren to follow their teachers to hunt in the mountains and exchange their

prey for rice. The emergence of such practice was due to the fact that in earlier years, schoolteachers were not well-paid, and indigenous people tended to be economically disadvantaged. "We could make money each time we went hunting with the teacher," Chang recalls. "If bamboo partridges were caught alive with their feet and wings undamaged, they could be sold at 50 NTD for each on the Wulai's old streets. That'd be enough to support us for a week if we tighten our belts. In the case when the meat begins to spoil or turn rancid, we'd make it into pickles. And since skinny kids like us weren't strong enough, it took 3 to 4 of us to drag a dead goat together, which was really tiring," Chang says laughingly.

leading to the stream is opened. After unloading the equipment, he walks into the water carrying the cast net. With a twist of the waist, the net is thrown and spread into a perfect circle in the air. As it is pulled in, we see various kinds of fish struggling inside of it, including Taiwan shovel jaw carps (*Onychostoma barbatulum*), Taiwan torrent carps (*Acrossocheilus paradoxus*), Taiwan freshwater minnow (*Opsariichthys pachycephalus*), and Formosan stripe daces (*Candidia barbata*). While everyone cannot help but exclaim with amazement, he simply blurts out, "the water is freezing cold in winter!"

Mastering Hunting Skills for the Sake of Survival

Born and raised in the Tampya Community of the Atayal people, Chang was recognized as a qualified hunter at the age of 23. Although he once left home to study at the military academy after graduating from high school, he never forgets the hunting and fishing skills he has acquired as a child. "I have to thank my elementary school teacher for his training," says Chang.

The teacher that Chang mentions was also a hunter from the village. Back in the 1980s, when the trade

In addition to wild animals, high-value catch from rivers, such as marbled eels, Taiwan shovel jaw carps, Taiwan torrent carps, and shrimps, can also be traded as commodities. The unsold catch would be preserved in the form of pickles. After years of training by his teacher, Chang has had no difficulty in hunting and fishing. The skills required of a hunter have been internalized as an essential part of his being. "As a child, I didn't know how to make money. It was my teacher who taught me how to survive as a hunter. These skills were essential for poor kids like us who lived from hand to mouth, never knowing where the next meal was coming from." He continues, "Had it not been for him, I'd be a doctor or lawyer now."



Skilled at throwing a cast net, Chang never fails to spread the net into a perfect circle in the air.

Founding a Hunter School to Impart Survival Skills

Chang left home in his late teens to study in the military academy. During his ten years of military service, Chang never let go of his hunting expertise despite his frequent transfer at an interval of 2 to 3 years. “I’d say that ‘hunting’ is the very term that has never escaped me throughout my entire life. Wherever I was stationed, be it Kukuan in Taichung, Yilan, or Keelung, I’d go hunting with locals in the wilderness. It’s easy to blend in as long as there’s a bottle of rice wine,” remarks Chang.

Just as wild animals can hardly adapt to urban environments, Chang has always wanted to return to Wulai and settle down. The desire was particularly strong when he found himself like a stranger to his eldest daughter in the first few years after her birth, which intensified his yearning for return. In 2007, Chang finally made it a reality when his daughter was studying in primary school. Having understood the importance of learning about their indigenous culture, he was determined to teach and pass on the traditional Atayal crafts and skills to younger generations. To this end, he took the initiative to contact the local school to discuss incorporating Atayal knowledge into the curriculum. However, despite Chang and the school’s emphasis on preserving indigenous culture, other parents were not on the same page with them.

“Parents want their children to focus on their studies and would not allow them to spend time on things other than schoolwork,” says Chang. He had been

trying for years to communicate with other parents to reach common ground, but it wasn’t until he was elected Chair of Parent-Teacher Association that they began to interact more frequently and closely, which slowly opened the gate of cultural learning. In 2015, the Wulai Hunter School was founded, opening its doors to a wide range of students, including non-indigenous children brought by their parents hoping to gain an experience of Atayal hunting culture, and grown-ups who came to learn wilderness survival skills for adventures into the mountains. It was indigenous participants who were the minority. Recruiting the faculty was no problem for Chang. “Finding instructors is pretty easy. Elders and women from the community are the best candidates who can help us come up with various courses.”

Chang’s hunter school features its curriculum with a prime focus on “how to survive in the wild.” This is inspired by his experience of serving as a volunteer fireman and rescuer in Wulai, where he sees many cases of victims either suffering from hungry or getting injured from falling off in mountain accidents. “How do you find alternative routes when the path is disrupted by a landslide? Should you go further into the mountains or move towards a stream? How to feed yourself if you decide not to move? If you’re afraid to take any self-help measures, what you can do is wait for people to find and save you.” Chang remarks seriously that these days, people are fond of getting close to nature, but they fail to pay attention to natural surroundings and lack the knowledge of survival skills. In fact, there are many resources in the forests and mountains that can be used for emergency assistance.

Passing On the Spirit of Atayal Hunters

As there are various unknown risks and dangers in the mountains, Chang decides to begin the curriculum with survival training in a river flood scenario. Participants are taught to pay attention to changes in the water. When finding it turning turbid or spotting fallen leaves floating, they must evacuate within less than 30 seconds in case the flood may come in a blink of an eye. In addition, when picking wood for a fire, they should choose those lying on stones, for stones can prevent the wood from moisture due to their lack of absorbency. Once their outer layer is shaved off, you'll find the inside of the firewood dry enough to make good fuel.

Besides basic knowledge about wilderness survival, Chang also introduces to students the Atayal people's traditional means of fishing such as the use of cast nets, stone-built fish traps, bare hands, and spears, all of which are used depending on the season or river conditions. Take the cast net for example. It is used when the water turns turbid at its highest or lowest levels. In cases like this, Chang insists that one must be accompanied by a partner. "If a green hand happens to catch driftwood but fails to pull the net back in time to remove it, he might be dragged into the river instead. Then there must be someone nearby to provide timely assistance. On the other hand, when the water level is low, the pair can work hand in hand with one casting stones to attract fish with sounds, while the other waiting for a chance to catch them."

Fish traps are usually set up in summertime by arranging stacks of stones into an inverted V-shape

The Atayal people have a unique way of making fish pickles. First, remove the guts of Taiwan shovel-jaw carps. Then rub the fish with salt before stacking them with cold rice layer by layer in a jar. After 15 days of fermentation, the fish pickle is done and ready to eat.



Although spearfishing is highly dangerous, it is most eco-friendly because only large fish are likely to be caught.

trap. In winter, fishing baskets are placed inside the trap to catch fish swimming upstream to spawn. Once trapped, they simply have no chance to escape. "But this method is cruel, so we place only one basket or two to prevent causing damage to the ecology." Chang goes on to point out that the most eco-friendly fishing method is using the spear because only large ones are likely to be caught this way. Fishing with bare hands, on the other hand, is for kids and participants from the hunter school as a kind of hands-on experience.

The catch must be processed while fresh by rubbing it with salt, and the Atayal people have a unique way of making fish pickles that emerges in response to the difficulty of food preservation in the old days and to the fact that fish is inedible when it turns stale. Take Taiwan shovel-jaw carps for instance. First, the guts are removed. Then the flesh is rubbed with salt before it is stacked with cold rice layer by layer in a jar. After 15 days of fermentation, the fish pickle is done and ready to eat. This unique way of pickling technique transforms the flavor of fish through fermentation, which not only ensures a longer period of preservation but also elevates the texture and taste to a different level. Unfortunately, due to the popularity of refrigerators, fewer and fewer people keep it a habit to make fish pickles.

Having perfected the crafts and skills of Atayal culture, now Chang is fully dedicated to his education career and the transmission of traditional knowledge. His aim is not only to impart knowledge about wilderness survival skills but also to familiarize more youngsters with their indigenous culture. "Young people nowadays tend to think they can make good hunters simply with a hunting rifle and a motorcycle. But they neglect the fact that to be a real hunter, one must be able to wait in patience in order to hunt something big." Chang hopes that as more and more people visit Wulai to get a better understanding of the indigenous culture, the prosperity of tourism industries would create more job opportunities for young people to stay, which in turn will ensure the continuation of Atayal culture and transmission of traditional wisdom.



Striking a Balance Between Ecology, Environment, and Industry

An Li-Hua



Tanaiku is the traditional fishing ground of the Saviki Community. The stream is the mother river that feeds and brings closer the relationship within the community. An Li-Hua says, “whether it's limiting access to the river to protect the fish, developing a tourism industry, or rebuilding after the disaster, everything we do is to make sure that our people can stay and live on our own lands.”



Written by **Liang Weng-Jin**; Photo credit: **Wang Shi-Hao**;

Translated by **Ker Nai-Yu**

*Tanaiku, the Mother River
Connecting Us with the Land*



Tanaiku is the shared property of us all, if people are all gone, then there is no point in rebuilding Tanaiku.



Tanaiku is the home of Taiwan shoveljaw carp. Although once on the verge of extinction, with tremendous restoration efforts from the Tsou community, schools of Taiwan shoveljaw carp again swim in abundance.

Rugged rocks stand erect amidst the valley, schools of Taiwan shoveljaw carp swim freely. The beautiful river named Tanaiku has always been abundant in aquatic animals, it is the traditional fishing ground of the Saviki Community, and clans in the community each have managing rights over different sections of the river, in turn building strict river ethics and order not to be violated.

"The landscape has vastly changed around here since the Typhoon Morakot," An Li-Hua (Akuan̄ e Yasiyunḡ), chief of Saviki Village in Alishan Township says, starting at the Tanaiku in front of her, with a hint of lament. In fact, it took them great effort and a long journey of limiting access to the river to protect the fish and rebuilding after the disaster. Having suffered many years of human and natural destruction, once almost depleted of fishes, now Tanaiku again boasts of clear waters and abundant aquatic animals.

Catch Only As Much As You can Consume

As An Li-Hua recalls from her childhood memory, her parents used to take her and her siblings to the river section which belongs to their clan, her father would go fishing while her mother assisted, and the kids would just be playing with water along the riverbank. "There were Lake candidus dace, Sharp-jaw barbel, and Taiwan shoveljaw carp in the river, the Taiwan shoveljaw carp in specific was considered most delicious by our people!" so says An Li-Hua.

Fishing in the mountain creek is a traditional lifestyle of the Tsou. In addition to using the fishnet, harpoon, and fish trap to catch food for daily consumption, the Tsou practices a unique group fishing activity - limiting access to the river and poisoning the fish. To ensure the quantity of fish caught during group fishing, clans with managing rights to the river section will collectively

limit access to the river for 3 to 5 years and wait for the fry in the river to reach maturity. A day will be selected later, when all clan members would gather by the river and use tuba root to put the fish to sleep before catching them on a large scale. "We will mash the tuba root for its juice by the upper stream or beside the stones, once aquatic animals come into contact with the tuba root juice, they will become temporarily paralyzed and flip belly side up, that's when our people will fish them out." An Li-Hua explains that the tuba root is not lethal and will only temporarily put the fish to sleep without contaminating the river ecology.

Limiting access to the river to poison fish is to ensure a maximum catch during collective fishing, "we will pick ones that are medium or large-sized, and release back into the river ones that are smaller in size." An Li-Hua further adds that "unlike the modern-day concept, our 'large' catch does not come in tons. In the old days, there were no refrigerators to chill food, so we mainly catch the amount that the population



Upstream of Zengwen River, the Tanaiku is the traditional fishing ground of the Saviki Community and a sacred place of the Tsou.

in the community can consume.” Between what is required to survive and the natural environment, the Tsou abide scrupulously by the code of ethics of the river, taking a measured amount to maintain the sustainable balance.

Restore the Environment and Ecology while Developing a Tourism Industry

But before long, aquatic animals in Tanaiku slowly depleted. In 1982, Alishan Road was officially open to the public, and the concept of selling and trading was introduced to the community. An Li-Hua explains that outsiders began coming to their community to bomb or electrify fishes illegally, or even using chemical agents to poison them, catching in large quantity aquatic animals from the Tanaiku, “some of our people began doing the same in seek of profit, which not only destroyed the ecology and environment, our original way of life and the code of ethics of the river also faced consequences.”

To restore their environment and traditions, the Tsou community convened a village assembly in October 1988 and made the resolution that beginning the following year, the community shall follow the tradition and initiate three to five years period of “limiting access to the river to protect the fish.” This time around, they are not limiting access to the river for a bigger catch but to protect the next to zero aquatic animals left in the Tanaiku and develop a community industry at the same time.

Sitting at a mere 500 meters above sea level, the Saviki Community inside the valley cannot grow crops with high economic benefits the way other Tsou communities sitting at mid to high altitude can, such as Dabang and Lalauya, community industry development is limited, thus making it harder for the younger population to make a living at home. The beautiful scenery of the Tanaiku has always been the most valuable resource of the community, if they could restore the river ecology, in the future, the community would be able to move into the tourism industry and strike a balance between the ecology, environment, and industry.

Even Our Own People are Punished If Caught

Limiting access to the river to protect the fish at Saviki Community is significant in terms of achieving both economic industry development and ecological conservation. Saviki Community is the first in Taiwan to initiate a convention of river self-government which is the fruit of the collective awareness of the residents. People in the community decided to ban all forms of fishing in the Tanaiku and applied to the public sector to draft relevant penalties. Anyone caught fishing illegally will be brought to the police station pending further punishment. To demonstrate their determination, everyone between the ages of 15 to 50 volunteered to form the Tanaiku Patrol, and they patrolled and protected the river for 5 years.

Still a student back then, whenever An Li-Hua returned to the community during school holidays, she would

take part in the patrol with her siblings, “this was a resolution jointly made by the community, everybody naturally took part in the patrol.” Limiting access to the river to protect the fish allowed the community to transcend the generation gap. The younger generation became proactive in taking part in community affairs while the older generation is gradually passing on the responsibility to the younger generation.

“Tanaiku is not just our traditional territory, it is an important medium in shaping our solidarity.” An Li-Hua says that when the community first proposed to limit access to the river to protect the fish, the idea of ecological conservation had yet to become mainstream. Protecting the Tanaiku to benefit the development of the tourism industry felt like betting on the future, “especially when the managing rights of different river sections belong to various clans, for people to be willing to relinquish their rights and allow the community to manage collectively was the most important step in limiting access to the river to protect the fish.”

In 1995, life returned to the Tanaiku, and it was reopened to the public as “Tanaiku Nature Park”. The Park attracted tens of thousands of tourists, and local job opportunities were also created. The community further organized the Saviki Community Tourism Development Association and Saviki Community Co-op, Alishan Township, Chiayi County, allowing the community to collectively manage and operate the nature park.

Tanaiku Nature Park is the first in Taiwan to be successfully rebuilt and restored wholly by the residents. With its rich ecology and beautiful environment, it is now a famous tourist spot.



As the current chief of Saviki Village, An Li-Hua has taken part in the protection of Tanaiku from a young age.

Hit by Typhoon Morakot, Tanaiku Again Devastated

However, Typhoon Morakot in 2009 devastated the land and property of the community, almost obliterating everything that was accumulated at the Tanaiku. “The flood washed away the roads and bridges, Saviki Community became a lone island, Taiwan shoveljaw carp disappeared from Tanaiku, and all the hardware and infrastructure were destroyed.” An Li-Hua recalled the depressing atmosphere in the community as they faced their devastated homes, some even suffered post-traumatic syndrome and would become anxious and frightened at the sound of the rain.

When rebuilding after the disaster, the government planned to relocate people living in dangerous areas to permanent houses down the mountain. An Li-Hua, then chairperson of Saviki Community Development Association, did not agree, “the rebuilding of the community and Tanaiku requires participation from everyone. If they are all gone, there would be no point in rebuilding.”

To keep people in Saviki, she fought to build permanent houses where it's safe in the community, and with the memory of the community working together to limit access to the river to protect the fish, she called upon the courage in everyone to face rebuilding after the disaster. “We were also facing an uncertain future then. This is our land, we can make it,” she said firmly.

Eventually, most of them chose to stay and work together to rebuild the community. After 14 months of renovation, Tanaiku was again opened to the public. Nowadays, the water is still running clean in the Tanaiku, schools of Taiwan shoveljaw carp still swimming freely. People in the community have become nature interpreters who share lively stories of the place with tourists, and the mother river continues to gurggle past them with vibrancy.

We don't Kid around When We are in the Waters!

A Glimpse at History through Objects

Although the traditions of indigenous peoples seem to be fading, present hunters still bring millet wine as an offering to the ancestral spirits when they go on their hunts. This ritual is a way of notifying the spirits that the hunters will be hunting for food here. Culture is the way of life, and bits and pieces of tradition can still be found in the daily lives of indigenous peoples.

Written by Kuo Po-Jiun; Illustrated by Lin Jia-Dong; Translated by Chen Deh-I

From Fooling around to Learning How to Hunt

In the past there were no video games, no barbie dolls - nature was the best toy to play with! Indigenous peoples live close to the mountains and forests, so when parents go into the mountains or sea to work or hunt, they would often bring their children with them. As the parents are working, the children would fool around in the waters.

"Of course the adults won't give you a harpoon, it's too dangerous." Said Atayal hunter Zhang Ren-



Jie, "nets are off-limits, too, kids might break it." Nevertheless, children still found ways to amuse themselves. Fish do not like sunlight, so they usually hide in the cracks between rocks. The youngsters would stick their hands in to grab fish and learn how to catch fish with no tools during the process.



Deciding What Tools to Use According to the Surrounding Conditions

As the children got older, they were given access to more tools: teenagers in junior high and high school can practice using fishing nets and later learn to use harpoons as an adult. However, age is not the only factor that determines which tool the hunter uses- experienced hunters decide which tool to use according to weather and environmental conditions. For example, if the visibility is poor due to rapid water flow or the water is too shallow for a dive, they will use fish nets to catch fish.

In the past, some communities would use tuba root to anesthetize large amounts of fish and then net them. This method is mostly deployed before rituals to get a certain amount of fish required for the ceremony. Tuba root only slows the fish down and temporarily knocks them out, and it is not often employed so it does not cause negative impact on the environment. However, nowadays in order to make a profit, some people will use illegal means such as electrofishing, blast fishing, or fishing with chemical poisons to catch large quantities of fish. This destroys the water environment and ecosystem sustainability and consequently threatens the continuity of the indigenous peoples' traditional culture.



No Refrigerator? We Have Other Ways to Preserve Food!

Refrigerators did not exist in the past and food could not be preserved for a long time. The Hakka people would pickle or cure food so that the food would keep longer, but they weren't the only ones with skills like this!

Indigenous communities pickle game meat, fish, shellfish, and even vegetables. Accompanying ingredients are simple, mainly salt and rice. However different areas would have different curing methods and recipes. For example, the siraw (pickled raw pork) of the Pangcah people uses coarse salt and is paired with half-raw glutinous rice. To make tmmyan (pickled meat), the Atayal people will add rice wine and rice. Fish are usually consumed within the maker's family and thus not that commonly found. But pickled Taiwan shovel-jaw carp is a traditional cultural dish of the Atayal people and must be paired with cold rice to bring out its complex texture and flavors!

In Front of My Home, There is a Small River, and Tourists...

Hunter Zhang Ren-Jie recalled that "a lot of elders refuse to eat fish caught near areas where people live. You can never fool them because the taste and texture of the fish are not the same."



As local tourism becomes more popular, more and more tourists are entering natural environments. The number of visitors often exceeds the maximum capacity of the environments and consequently speeds up the deterioration of landscapes and ecosystems. The culture of the indigenous peoples is founded on interactions between the people and the environment. So drastic changes which occur in the mountains and natural environments would threaten the habitats of wild animals and therefore force community members to change their lifestyles.



Respect Others and Be Grateful to Mother Nature

Regardless of community, each indigenous family has its own hunting area and does not enter or use other family's hunting grounds without permission. The hunting grounds are not defined by actual "lines"; instead, the ancestors used natural landmarks to mark out the family territory. Later some community hunting grounds were shared between families due to inter-community marriages.

When hunters hunt, they are taking resources from nature. To thank the generosity of Mother Nature, communities would hold a ritual to express their gratitude to the ancestral spirits and ask their ancestors to keep community members safe. On the other hand, the ceremony is also an early warning to the animals: the hunters are coming!

Seasoned activists passing the baton!
See the 34th issue for the section *The New*

